

At the present time Professor Robert D. Nordstrom, former Chairman of the Mershon Committee, is preparing a longer history of the Center for publication in 1970. Unfortunately, that work will not be completed until late in the Centennial year. Therefore, in order to include the story of the Mershon Center in the Centennial History Series, an excerpt from Gene M. Lyons and Louis Morton's book, Schools for Strategy: Education and Research in National Security Affairs, dealing with the early development of the program is combined with a portion of the 1969 Director's report.

William J. Vollmar
University Archivist

The Mershon Center for Education in National Security had its inception when Colonel Ralph D. Mershon, an alumnus and former Army reserve officer, left the bulk of a large personal fortune to the University on his death in February, 1952. Not less than half the income of the bequest was to be used to "promote, encourage and carry on civilian-military education and training in the United States and its territories," with the decision as to what constituted such education and training left to the "judgement and discretion" of the University.

Colonel Mershon had been a staunch advocate of a strong reserve system and had been instrumental in establishing the Reserve Officers Training Corps after World War I. Reserve affairs, therefore, plainly fell within the scope of the bequest, and in the initial Mershon program, heavy emphasis was placed on ROTC activities. Between 1955 and 1960, Mershon funds supported a pioneer program in cooperation with the Air Force ROTC to test the feasibility of civilian instruction in ROTC courses. At the inception and again at the end of the program, conferences on ROTC problems were held, and, in the summer of 1957, the Mershon Fund supported a short Air Force ROTC Instructor Training Course. In addition, Mershon funds made possible, in 1956 and 1957, a training program for Army ROTC instructors in American Military History, a required ROTC course that lent itself to civilian instruction. Since then, the Committee has continued to support other ROTC programs.

But the improvement of ROTC instruction was only one of many activities sponsored by the Mershon Fund. The plan was to avoid long-range commitments and to support only limited ventures with a minimum of faculty direction and participation. Under the aegis of a Defense Studies Committee composed of faculty members and headed by Professor H. F. Harding, the Fund supported a number of diverse projects--a seminar in National Security Policy on the

Harvard model, related courses in the History, Political Science, and Economics Departments, a scholarship and fellowship program, public lectures and conferences.

At the same time, problems of definition, purpose, and focus were the subject of a continuous inquiry by faculty members. One difficulty was the lack of specific guidance in the bequest and the nature of the field itself; the other was the large amount of money available. The first made it possible to justify almost any project in the name of "civil-military education"; the second to support a great number of projects. Aware of these problems, the Defense Studies Committee attempted to frame a concept of national security studies and a program to meet the special needs of Ohio State.

In February, 1958, the Committee submitted a report to the President and the Board of Trustees proposing a broad program to develop trained minds--"High Talent Manpower" was the phrase used--and create ideas and imaginative proposals. The Committee envisaged the development of this program on three levels, to be carried forward concurrently: "one, the immediate task of organization for defense; two, the intermediate task of developing High Talent manpower; and three, the task of creating a flow of ideas that will guarantee our long-range security."

At the same time as these general goals were articulated, the organization of the program was given new form. The Defense Studies Committee was dissolved and a new twelve-man committee with enlarged powers was created. Known as the Mershon Committee on Education in National Security, this group was composed of nine voting members (appointed from the faculty by the President for staggered three-year terms) and three corresponding members--the Dean of the Graduate School and the Assistants to the Vice Presidents for Curriculum and for Research. Appointments to the Mershon Committee included

representation from many departments and schools of the University--Engineering, Medicine, Law, Agriculture, Chemistry, Political Science, History, and Economics. The Chairman of the Committee was Robert J. Nordstrom, Associate Dean of the Law School.

The Mershon Committee does not itself direct any of the activities in the program, but is rather a supervisory board establishing general policy and controlling the purse strings. It has no staff of its own, and when it requires expert advice, it calls in consultants. In the sense that it defines the conditions to be met by those requesting support and passes on the merits of their proposals, the Committee acts like a foundation. Following this example, it adopted initially the "seed money" principle--it supported projects for a limited period of time, after which the projects had to become self-supporting or receive support through regular University channels or outside sources.

Whether the "seed money" principle, utilized so effectively by the foundations in opening up new areas of research and stimulating interest in selected fields of study, was applicable to the situation at Ohio State was not at all certain. Indeed, the Committee reconsidered its position after the first few years. For it had become clear that no outside agencies would support such activities so long as the University itself had the means to do so. But the "seed money" principle had committed the Mershon Committee to a series of experimental projects and weakened the possibility of a continuing large-scale integrated program with a guarantee of permanence that independent resources could provide.

Both educational or instructional and research activities have been conducted under the auspices of the Mershon Fund. Probably the longest-lived is the National Security Policy Seminar, established on a five-year trial basis in 1955 and then continued. It is a three-term course for graduate

students and advanced undergraduates, and is not listed under a particular department. The Director of the course has changed several times. For a period it was Professor Harding, who was also Acting Director of National Security Studies. Professor Harvey C. Mansfield, formerly chairman of the Political Science Department, was director for a year, and since then the course has been headed by a member of the Law faculty and by an economist appointed as a Mershon Professor in 1961.

The Seminar has followed the pattern of the Harvard Seminar in many ways. During the initial years, for example, extensive use was made of visiting lecturers, with members of the staff serving as chairmen, panel moderators, or discussants. No effort or expense was spared to bring to the Seminar the most distinguished speakers; in one year, General Arthur Trudeau, Paul Nitze, Eric Goldman, Gerhard Ritter, Albert Hill, Henry Kissinger, Dean Acheson, and V. K. Krishna Menon, among others, attended. However qualified the speakers, there was considerable doubt whether such a roster actually constituted a course. The same question had been raised at Harvard, it will be recalled, and the decision there had been to reduce the number of speakers. Under Professor Mansfield's direction, there was a similar reduction, and the Seminar was conducted more like a college course than a series of public lectures. This general tendency has continued.

In addition to the Seminar, the Mershon Fund supported a special national security course entitled "Minor Problems in National Security Policy," offered only once, in 1959-60. The course was largely an experiment undertaken by John Phelps, a physicist, who was himself working under a Mershon grant on research on deterrence and arms control. (Phelps later left to join the staff of the Institute for Defense Analyses.) The students numbered seven, five of them supported by Mershon funds. Each student selected a topic and

prepared a paper for discussion; occasionally, outside scholars, such as Albert Wohlstetter, were invited to meet with the group, not to lecture but to participate in the discussion. In organizing the course after the first term, Phelps limited the theme to "Accidental War" and had the students write research reports on various aspects of the subject. These papers on accidental war have been widely cited in the expanding literature in the field and constitute one of the few published contributions of the Mershon program.

The Mershon Committee also supported certain departmental courses, and was willing to support more if a member of the faculty or a department desired to add them. The criterion for Mershon support was that the courses make a "demonstrably substantial contribution" to national security studies; the method, on the "seed money" principle, was to pay for released time for the instructor to prepare the course and teach it for one or two terms. After that, the department was to budget for the course as it did for all others. One could expect, therefore, a certain unwillingness on the part of departments to encourage experimental courses that they would have to fund later on, and a reluctance on the part of younger instructors to become involved in a project that lacked strong departmental support.

Under these conditions, the impact of the Mershon program on the social sciences was at first limited. In the History Department, for example, the Committee supported a course in "American Military Policy," taught by Professor Harry L. Coles, and, in 1959, also supported a proposal to bring visiting professors in military history to the campus for several months. One was the German scholar, Gerhard Ritter, and the other Norman Gibbs, Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford University. The visiting program was not continued beyond these two, however, nor did the department utilize Mershon support

to expand its work in military history beyond the course taught by Professor Coles.

Interestingly enough, the most positive response to Mershon support came from the Department of Economics. For some years, the Committee supported a basic course in the Economics of National Security taught by Professor Meno Lovenstein. In 1961, with Mershon support, the department appointed Richard M. Sherman Jr., a former staff member of the Army-affiliated Operations Research Office, Mershon Professor of Economics. Professor Sherman teaches a graduate seminar in problems of national security economics and ran the National Security Policy Seminar from 1962 to 1964. The Economics Department also voted in 1962 to make the economics of national security a recognized area of specialization for its graduate students, thus making Ohio State one of the few universities where national security is a major field within a department of economics.

In developing a Mershon program, Ohio State largely relied on its own resources. The University has been slow in adding new strength to its faculty, even though the Mershon Committee was at first willing to support the appointment of Mershon Professors specializing in national security affairs in different departments. Not until 1961-62 did any of the social-science departments appoint professors in this field. The reasons for this reluctance are not entirely clear, but may be related to these factors: a conviction that the existing faculty was adequate to the task; doubts about the relevance of the program to the University's aims; unwillingness of traditional departments to enter new fields of study; the competing rivalries among departments and schools for a share of the funds; and, finally, an inability to attract men from the top universities or from important posts in the government.

Some members of the University had always recognized the need to add

to the faculty recognized authorities in national security affairs, and a few abortive efforts were made to do so; not until 1960, however, was the early proposal to appoint Mershon Professors seriously pursued. These men were to have a dual appointment, in a department and in the Mershon Center, to teach courses and participate in the Center's activities. Initially, their salaries were to be met from Mershon funds, but would later be paid from the department's regular budget, although no definite time was set for this change. It was expected that these Mershon Professors would not only strengthen the departments but also the Mershon program, and presumably would carry on their research and direct graduate students in the field. Various departments were asked whether they were interested in this arrangement, and if so, to nominate candidates. Not all responded affirmatively. But Professor Sherman was named a Mershon Professor of Economics in 1961 and, in 1962, Edgar Furniss, formerly of the Politics Department of Princeton, was named Mershon Professor of Political Science. By the end of 1962, two other Mershon professors had been appointed, but in fields that could only be included in a national security program within Ohio State's broad definition of it. One was in Engineering and the other in Chemistry.

Strengthening the faculty was only one problem faced by the Mershon Committee; the other was how to arouse student interest in courses and specialized fields in national security affairs. An extensive scholarship and fellowship program was initiated with the expectation that the recipients would not only add to the strength of national security studies on the campus but attract competent young scholars from other universities to Ohio State. In the three years of 1958-61 alone, there were sixty-six such awards on the predoctoral level and six more on the postdoctoral level. Of the predoctoral scholars, forty-two were undergraduates and twenty-four graduates, all of them

required to attend the National Security Policy Seminar. (Many of the awards were made to students in the physical sciences--another reflection of the broad definition of national security studies held by the Merghon program.) The postdoctoral fellowships, carrying a stipend of \$7,500, were for mature scholars who were required to remain in residence for a year and participate in the Seminar and other Merghon activities, while doing their own research.

In addition to trying to strengthen faculty and student participation in national security affairs, the Merghon Committee sponsored a series of public lectures and conferences. The conference program included meetings on the ROTC, an important Civil-Military Relations Conference held in 1959, and two meetings focused on international law, one being the Fifth Annual Regional Meeting of the American Society of International Law. The Committee also supported a large gathering in February, 1959, to consider the logistical implications of changes in military technology; conferences on the role of military forces in the Middle East and Latin America; and a meeting in October, 1962, on the economics of research and development, initially organized by the University's College of Commerce and Administration. In addition, in 1960, the Committee inaugurated an annual competition (for a prize of \$2,500) for the best book-length manuscript on national security "to create an awareness of the problems of our national security and to stimulate ideas which will contribute to their solution." In the first three years, three books were accepted for publication, although only in 1961 was a volume deemed sufficiently broad in scope to warrant the full prize.

All of these activities added up, by 1963, to a considerable amount of experimentation, but not to an effective program. The program at Ohio State cannot be said to have made a major contribution to the development

of research and training in national security affairs, even though it had the financial resources to make the program a success. Research failed to produce a single significant publication by a member of the Ohio State faculty; the volumes published were submitted by outside scholars for the Mershon Award, or consisted of papers most of which had been written by outside scholars. The National Security Policy Seminar was uneven, and had few students who had not been attracted by the promise of scholarships and fellowships. There were many public lectures and conferences, but the tangible results--in terms of publication and student interest--were small. Finally, efforts to strengthen the faculty through the appointment of Mershon professors were minimal in the first seven years of the program. In short, Ohio State failed to realize its potential in national security studies.

This failure seems to have confirmed the "haunting fear," expressed by Vice President Frederick Heimberger in 1959, at the time the Mershon Committee was reorganized, that the faculty "might fail to take full advantage of this opportunity to do things which are bold and productive and which will add to the strength and prestige of this University." This fear must have also been felt by the Mershon Committee, when its first efforts to secure more faculty participation brought little response. But the Committee continued to explore the ways that it could contribute significantly to the study of national security. Under its broad definition of that field, it was supporting a variety of research projects in physical sciences, but it clearly needed to do more in the social sciences.

In mid-1960, a committee of the social-science departments and the Law School actually prepared a detailed study for a Social Science Center for National Security Policy Studies. It defined the field of national security studies in terms of the development and use of national power and

noted the interdisciplinary character of the field. Carefully studying existing centers, seminars, and institutes concerned with national security problems, it concluded that the Ohio State program had failed "because of the lack of a proper organization, adequate resources, and the necessary encouragement from the right places." It found that there were a number of teaching and research activities at Ohio State in national security affairs, but thought they were uncoordinated and unfocused. What was needed was a center, under a single director, to serve as a "catalyst and clearing-house," which would develop the three major fields--graduate studies, advanced specialized training, and faculty research.

This proposal for a center with a full-time director and an integrated program was not adopted. A modified social-science program in the form of a Graduate Institute for World Affairs was established in 1961 by the Mershon Committee, with a member of the History Department, Professor Sydney Fisher, a specialist in the Middle East, serving as Acting Director. The Institute was based on an "interdisciplinary approach" and was set up "to stimulate and facilitate . . . studies of the development of national strength, the threat of force in international relations and the diminution of such threats, and the impact of these phenomena upon world society as well as upon individual national communities." Major efforts at the Institute were made in two directions: to encourage graduate students to participate in interdepartmental seminars (in addition to meeting their departmental requirements); and to hold conferences on specialized topics in which both graduate students and faculty could participate. The Institute activities still did not comprise a national security program as envisaged in the report of the social-science committee, but it offered certain institutional arrangements that could eventually prove useful.

It was not until 1963 that an integrated social-science program was set up. It is significant that the program was put under the direction of Professor Furniss, who had been named Mershon Professor of Political Science the previous year. For Furniss was a teacher whose special qualifications were what Ohio State had been lacking all these years; he was an established scholar whose research had been done primarily in national security affairs. Of all the members of the Ohio State social-science departments, only Professor Mansfield had been able to bring similar stature to the program; but, in Mansfield's case, national security was not of primary interest. While at Princeton, Furniss had participated in the Center of International Studies, contributed to several of the Center's studies, completed an important research project on contemporary France in connection with a study group at the Council on Foreign Relations, and contributed some of the earliest textual materials for national security courses.*

With the creation of the Social Science Program in 1963, Furniss expanded attention to disciplines and departments in which governments and foundations were then largely uninterested. Several other Mershon Professors were appointed, for three- or five-year terms. The number of fellowships was increased to include more doctoral and postdoctoral fellows from other universities. A lecture series was established, and distinguished scholars and statemen were brought to campus for several days. The publications program was expanded. Furniss personally was interested in the Atlantic Community and was especially concerned about the future of the United States' relations with Europe, both East and West, as they were being conducted through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Anticipating the twentieth year of NATO in 1969, when members might withdraw, Furniss initiated both

*The preceeding portion of this history has been quoted directly from Gene M. Lyons and Louis Morton, Schools for Strategy: Education and Research in National Security Affairs (New York: Praeger, 1965) pp. 172-79

public lectures and faculty research four years in advance of most people's concern that the United States might be trapped between a rigid adherence to a cold-war conception of NATO and a poorly formulated alternative for collaboration within Western Europe and with Eastern Europe.

Between 1963 and 1966, the Social Science Program became an even larger part of the Center's activities. It began to acquire a distinctive focus, and it attracted favorable attention from scholars and statesmen. In the spring of 1966, Professor Furniss was asked to accept a United Nations position, one that would have charged him with responsibility for training and recruiting United Nations administrative personnel. Despite the allure of that opportunity, he remained at Ohio State.

The University's senior officials and the Mershon Committee anticipated appointing Furniss Director of the Center, a position that had been long authorized but never filled. But in August of 1966, Furniss died suddenly.

The Mershon Committee designated William T. Burke, Professor of Law, as Acting Director of the Social Science Program. Professor Burke was then supervising Mershon-sponsored studies in legal and political problems of prospective developments in oceanography. Through his initiative, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace had joined with the Mershon Center to sponsor two conferences on law, organization, and security in the use of the oceans; subsequently, the Swedish Institute for Peace Research commissioned a paper from Burke on the same subject for an international conference.

On April 13, 1967, the Board of Trustees acted favorably on the Mershon Committee's recommendation that James A. Robinson, Professor of Political Science, be made Director of the Center, effective April 15. Subsequently, the Committee proposed, and the Faculty Council and Trustees approved, a reduction in size of the Committee (to seven) and the designation of the

Director as a member and chairman. Upon the advice of this Committee, the Director reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and through him to the President and to the Board of Trustees.

A number of changes in policy were made between 1967 and 1969. First, the graduate fellowship program was revised to replace one-year awards with fellowships competitive with those of NDEA and NSF. Second, the practice of awarding fellowships to Ph.D. candidates from other institutions to come to Ohio State and complete their dissertations was discontinued, except in special cases in which the dissertation bears closely on OSU or Mershon Center research. Third, the post-doctoral fellowships were awarded only to scholars whose work supplements or facilitates Ohio State faculty research.

The effects of the last two changes included a large increase in the amount of funds available to OSU graduate students and faculty researchers and a sharpened focus of Center activities. This increase in funds for research permitted the Center to continue to rely almost exclusively on income from the Mershon bequest. In fact, at present the Center has no external grants or contracts, from either foundations or governments. It has not conducted, and does not now conduct, classified research.

The major objective of the Center is to support faculty research, not so much on a project-by-project basis as a foundation or research council does, but through programs integrated according to central themes. These are developed during consultation with faculty throughout the University and with the advice of the Mershon Committee. Currently, the themes for Center research are first, Non-Military Factors of Peace and Security; second, Decision and Policy Processes Affecting Foreign and Defense Policies; third, Social Science Methodologies Relevant to Peace and Security. From time to time, changes in emphasis are expected.

On December 11, 1969, President Fawcett submitted to the Board of Trustees the Mershon Committee's recommendation of a successor to Dr. Robinson, who on September 1, had become Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. As the new Director, the Board designated Dr. Richard C. Snyder, of the University of California at Irvine, who simultaneously was appointed Mershon Professor of Education and Public Policy, effective July 1, 1970.